

FOR RELEASE: July 6, 2000

Paul Supports Medicaid Relief Bill for Rural Hospitals

Washington, DC - Congressman Ron Paul this week signed on as an original cosponsor of "The Medicaid Relief for Rural Hospitals Act (HR 4793). This bill, which was introduced by Representative Jack Kingston of Georgia, is designed to allow rural hospitals the same access to existing federal Medicaid funds enjoyed by larger urban and suburban facilities. Under current law, hospitals which serve a large number of indigent and Medicaid patients may be deemed "disproportionate share hospitals" (DSH). DSH facilities are eligible to receive additional Medicaid funds to help them provide quality medical care. H.R. 4793 waives the federal requirement that facilities that have been designated "Critical Access Hospitals" or "Essential Rural Health Care Providers" by state governments have two obstetricians on staff in order to participate in the DSH program. By removing this federal requirement, H.R. 4793 makes it easier for rural hospitals that serve a large number of Medicaid recipients to participate in the DSH program. "The DSH program is designed to ensure Medicaid funds are used in those areas that serve a large number of Medicaid eligible citizens or other low-income populations, not to force hospitals to divert needed resources into complying with DC-based bureaucrats' idea of quality care. Eligibility for the DSH program should be determined by state officials, which have a better ability to determine the unique health care needs of their populations than do federal officials. "As an OB-GYN I certainly understand the importance of hospital access to citizens in the 14th District of Texas. I also understand that citizens in rural areas should benefit from the use of their own federal tax dollars in the same manner as citizens in suburban and urban areas. The ultimate goal is the best possible health care for rural citizens- not micromanaging hospitals or trying to force them to comply with inflexible standards set by the federal government," Paul said.

